

IN THEIR WORDS

From the pages of the Published Writers of Rossmoor

Love Is Beyond Race, National Boundaries and Social Systems

By Shaoping Moss

My beloved husband, Leonard Moss, passed away recently. While sorting through old files I discovered a feature story published by the magazine of SUNY Geneseo 32 years ago. Reading it again brought back many happy memories. I'd like to share it in his memory.

Leonard Moss didn't marry the girl next door.

In fact, he says, "I had to travel 10,000 miles to find the perfect mate."

It was in China where Moss, a member of Geneseo's English faculty, met his wife, Shaoping Wu. Moss went to China on a Fulbright Fellowship in 1985 to teach literature at the Beijing Foreign Studies University for one year.

But, says Moss, "I liked it so much there that I ended up staying for two years."

Moss, who had never been to Asia before, says he enjoyed being a part of the Chinese culture.

"At first I had to get the hang of the physical conditions, especially the crowded cities," says Moss.

The average person in China doesn't own a car so Moss bought a bicycle and learned to weave his way through the crowded streets.

Moss found the Chinese people most endearing. "The Chinese people were wonderfully warm-hearted, kind, and generous," he says.

Shaoping was one of the main reasons why

Moss enjoyed his stay in China so much. The two met through a mutual friend – a woman from Britain. At the time, Shaoping was a teacher at a police academy.

Moss and Shaoping became very close and eventually the two decided to marry.

"Unfortunately, there are three things in China that you cannot do without permission: work, move to a new home and get married," says Shaoping. "Although conditions have improved in the past 15 years, there is still very little room for personal freedom."

Moss and Shaoping needed the consent of everyone from employers to government officials in order to marry. Both agree that it was not easy. "Even the party secretary tried to make me reconsider," Shaoping says.

"All the red tape we went through doesn't exist all because of the communists – it exists because of a social organization that has existed for years in China," explains Moss.

Finally, after six months, they were given permission to get married and Moss returned to the United States in August 1987 with his new wife.

Despite all the couple went through to get married, Moss says, "I am not interested in politics. I still think that the Chinese are very hospitable people. Shaoping and I had so many friends that there were more than 200 people at our wedding reception."

Adds Moss, "My trip changed my life completely and I'm glad I brought some of

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China back home with me. ..."

Leonard's trip to China did not just change his life completely, but mine as well. After we got married, he brought me to a new life in America. We experienced so many happy events together in our 33 years of marriage.

He was not only my dear husband, but also my good teacher and best friend. He guided me patiently to assimilate into the American society, helped me start a new career and supported me whenever I encountered difficulties. Our deep love for each other also helped us endure some hard times.

Leonard was also an affectionate father and excellent role model to our only son, Eli. He showed our son how to love, and how to work hard; helped him get acquainted with Jewish culture; guided him through every stage of his education from kindergarten to graduate school; finally launched him into a successful

career and a happy marriage. He watched every step in Eli's growing-up with pride and happiness and shared with him his view of life as a fascinating and continually evolving adventure. Len was many things to his son – father, teacher and friend.

The three of us were good companions, enjoying vacationing at Cape Cod in summer and cross-country skiing and snowboarding at the Gunstock Mountain in winter. We celebrated Eli's Bar Mitzvah at the Jewish congregation; rejoiced Eli and Sara's wedding in the redwood forest; attended Eli and Sara's graduation from Brown; and then Eli's Ph.D. defense at Stanford. ... Those happy memories are endless, which will stay forever in our minds and hearts.

Now I believe that the success of our mixed marriage has further proved that love based on mutual respect and appreciation is holy and eternal, beyond race, national boundaries and social systems.

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By Julie Hugh

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